

Message Text

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FOL VIENNA 9205 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO SECDEF NATO ALL
MBFR MISSIONS PRAGUE LISBON SOFIA NOV 8, 1973 FROM VIENNA
REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

S E C R E T VIENNA 9205

FOR US REP MBFR

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, NATO
SUBJECT: MBFR: AD HOC GROUP MEETING EVENING OF NOVEMBER 7

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: US REP CIRCULATED REPORT OF CONVERSATION
WITH SOVIET REP (SEPTOL) IN WHICH KHLESTOV OUTLINED PROPOSAL
HE PLANNED TO MAKE IN NOVEMBER 8 PLENARY. AD HOC GROUP
REVIEWED SITUATION AND AGREED UPON BRIEF AND GUARDED ADDITION
TO BRITISH STATEMENT AT NOVEMBER 8 PLENARY. GROUP ALSO APPROVED
CONTINGENCY GUIDANCE ON HANDLING POSSIBLE PRESS QUERIES AND
CONSIDERED POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS. END SUMMARY.

2. US REP CIRCULATED REPORT OF CONVERSATION IN WHICH SOVIET
REP (KHLESTOV) OUTLINED PROPOSAL HE INTENDED TO MAKE AT
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NOVEMBER 8 PLENARY (SEPTOL), NOTING THAT KHLESTOV HAD INDICATED
HE WAS MAKING PRESENTATION IN CONFIDENCE AS A COURTESY TO
AVOID SURPRISES. US REP CAUTIONED THAT GROUP SHOULD NOT REVEAL
THAT IT HAD HAD ADVANCE WORD OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL. US REP
SUGGESTED THAT AD HOC GROUP CONSIDER THREE MAIN QUESTIONS.

FIRST WAS WHAT SHOULD BE SAID AT NOVEMBER 8 PLENARY. US REP SUGGESTED A BRIEF ADDITION TO UK REP ROSE STATEMENT WHICH WOULD SIMPLY SAY THAT WEST BELIEVED THAT ANY PROPOSAL SHOULD BE JUDGED ACCORDING TO THE CONCEPTS BEING DEVELOPED IN WESTERN STATEMENTS.

3. SECOND MAJOR QUESTION RAISED BY US REP WAS THAT OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR THE PACE OF ALLIED PRESENTATIONS LEADING TO THE FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL. HE OUTLINED FOUR POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES IN ORDER TO START DISCUSSION: (1) TO MAINTAIN THE PRESENTLY PROJECTED PACE AND TO USE THE SECOND ROUND OF THEMES TO PRESENT CRITIQUE OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL; (2) TO ACCELERATE THE PACE OF PLANNED PRESENTATIONS SLIGHTLY AND TO CRITIQUE THE SOVIET PROPOSAL; (3) TO SOMEWHAT ACCELERATE THE PACE OF THE ALLIED THEMES PRESENTATIONS AND TO TABLE THE ALLIED FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL WITHOUT ADDRESSING THE SOVIET PROPOSAL IN THE INTERIM, AND (4) TO START IN THE US PRESENTATION ON NOVEMBER 13 TO PRESENT THE ELEMENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL.

4. US REP SUGGESTED THAT BEST COURSE MIGHT BE TO CONTINUE PRESENTATION OF THEMES WITH FRG AND US STATEMENTS ON NOVEMBER 13. AND CANADIAN AND BELGIAN STATEMENTS ON NOVEMBER 15, AND TO TRY TO BE READY TO PRESENT THE FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL IN FIRST PLENARY WEEK OF NOVEMBER 18. THIS APPROACH, US REP SAID, WOULD AVOID IMPLICATIONS THAT THE WEST HAD BEEN THROWN OFF ITS GENERAL CONCEPT FOR PRESENTATION OF THEMES LEADING UP TO A PROPOSAL. AT THE SAME TIME, THE ALLIED FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL WOULD IN PRACTICE BE ADVANCED SEVERAL WEEKS EARLIER THAN HAD BEEN PLANNED. THIS WOULD BE DONE WITH THE IDEA IN MIND THAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT BE PUTTING OUT THEIR PROPOSAL TO THE PRESS AND SEEKING TO FOCUS DISCUSSION ON IT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS THEMSELVES AND THAT THE WEST WOULD NOT WISH TO BE TOO LONG IN GETTING OUT ITS PROPOSAL.

5. THIRD TOPIC RAISED BY US REP WAS CONTINGENCY PRESS GUID-
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ANCE. US REP EXPLAINED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE IN WESTERN INTEREST TO MAKE THE SOVIET PROPOSAL PUBLIC. WESTERN DELEGATIONS SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP IT CONFIDENTIAL AND THE AD HOC GROUP SHOULD CAUTION THE NAC IN THIS CONNECTION. US REP INDICATED THAT, SINCE THE SOVIET PROPOSAL APPEARED DESIGNED FOR EARLY PUBLICATION, AD HOC GROUP SHOULD ALSO BE PREPARED TO REACT QUICKLY BUT MODERATELY TO ITS PUBLICATION, IF THIS IN FACT OCCURRED, AND TO RESULTING PRESS ENQUIRIES. IN THIS EVENT THOUGH ALLIES WOULD WISH TO AVOID PRESS CONFRONTATION WITH SOVIETS, AND DIRECT COMMENT ON CONTENT OF SOVIET PROPOSAL, THEY COULD NOT LEAVE PRESS FIELD COMPLETELY TO SOVIET PROPOSAL WITHOUT SUGGESTING SOME LINE OF COMMENT TO WESTERN PRESS.

6. ITALIAN REP (CAGIATI) URGED THAT GROUP TAKE THE LINE THAT

IT WAS NOT SURPRISED BY THE PROPOSAL. HE FELT THAT IT WOULD NOT BE GOOD FOR PUBLIC OPINION TO LEAVE THE PROPOSAL WITHOUT AN ANSWER FOR A LONG TIME. BELGIAN REP (ADRIAENSSEN) PROFESSED TO SEE SOVIET PROPOSAL LESS AS A PROPAGANDA MOVE THAN AS A TACTICAL ONE DESIGNED TO PROBE WESTERN SERIOUSNESS ABOUT TWO PHASES. HE URGED THAT THE GROUP BE VERY CAREFUL NOT TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF BEING OVERLY IMPRESSED WITH IT. IT SHOULD MERELY TAKE NOTE OF THE PROPOSAL AND CARRY ON. THE WEST MIGHT SAY THAT IT WELCOMED THE FACT THAT THE EAST HAD BROKEN ITS SILENCE AND BEGUN A DIALOGUE.

7 FRG REP BEHRENDTS BELIEVED THAT THE PROPOSAL WAS A PROPAGANDISTIC ONE PROBABLY DESIGNED FOR THE PRESS AND URGED THAT THE GROUP BE PREPARED TO RESPOND QUICKLY TO ITS PUBLICATION. HE FELT THAT IT WAS INEVITABLE TO ACCELERATE SOMEWHAT PRESENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL.

8. UK REP ROSE BELIEVED THE PROPOSAL WAS CLEARLY DESIGNED FOR THE PRESS AND THE FACT THAT IT WAS PUT FORWARD SO QUICKLY GAVE HIM CONCERN ON TWO COUNTS. FIRST, THAT THE AHG MEMBERS NOT ALLOW THEMSELVES TO BE FORCED INTO A NEGOTIATION FOCUSED ON SOVIET PROPOSAL ALONE, AND SECOND, MORE GENERALLY, IF IT WAS TRUE THAT THE SOVIETS WERE STRESSING THE PROPAGANDISTIC SIDE OF THIS NEGOTIATION, THAT MIGHT MEAN THAT THEY WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO GET DOWN TO SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS. THE WEST, THEREFORE, SHOULD STICK TO ITS GROUND AND CONTINUE WITH WELL-THOUGHT-OUT PRESENTATIONS WHICH

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COULD BE SUPPORTED WITH GOOD ARGUMENTS THE GROUP MIGHT HAVE TO ACCELERATE PRESENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL, BUT IT SHOULD NOT FEEL BOUND TO REPLY DIRECTLY THE SOVIETS THROUGH EARLY DISCUSSION OF DETAIL OF THEIR PROPOSAL. TO DO THAT WOULD RISK NEGOTIATING ON THE SOVIET PROPOSAL WITHOUT GETTING THEM TO ADDRESS THE WESTERN PROPOSAL. IT MIGHT, BE CONCLUDED, BE NECESSARY TO HAVE THE TALKS RUN IN PARALLEL FOR SOME TIME.

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9. CANADIAN REP GRANDE BELIEVED THAT THE GROUP SHOULD CONTINUE WITH ITS PLANNED PRESENTATIONS BUT ACCELERATE THEM A BIT IN ORDER TO FINISH NEXT WEEK. IN CONNECTION WITH TABLING THE FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL HE ASKED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO PRE-REDUCTION CONSTRAINTS. US DEP REP REPLIED THAT THIS WAS AN ADDITIONAL PROBLEM IN THAT DECISION UNLIKELY TO BE AVAILABLE PRIOR TO TIME WHEN FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL NEEDED, BUT THROUGH CAREFUL FORMULATION OF FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO DRAFT AROUND IT.

10 GREEK REP DOUNTAS BELIEVED THAT ONE OF THE SOVIET MOTIVES WAS AN EFFORT TO DISORGANIZE THE WEST. HE FELT THAT IT WAS

DESIRABLE TO AVOID NERVOUS OR PREMATURE REACTIONS. HE BELIEVED THAT THE GROUP SHOULD CONTINUE WITH ITS PRESENTATION AND PRESENT A SOUND POSITION. AS TO PRESS HANDLING, GREEK REP BELIEVED THT THE FACT THAT THE WEST WAS ALREADY EXPLAINING ITS POSITION WAS A GOOD RESPONSE AND THAT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO GET TRAPPED INTO DISCUSSION OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL BY FEARS OF ITS PROPAGANDA IMPACT IN WEST. GREEK REP NOTED THAT SOVIET PROPOSAL PROVIDED FOR DISBANDING OF NATIONAL FORCES WHILE RUSSIAN TROOPS COULD BE WITHDRAWN JUST 600 KILOMETERS. THIS, HE SAID, WOULD DEFEAT THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF THE ASSOCIATED MEASURES WHICH THE WEST HAD CONTEMPLATED.

11. AHG DRAFTED A PARAGRAPH TO BE ADDED TO UK REP'S NOV 8 PRESENTATION, WHICH WILL FOLLOW KHLESTOV'S, IN ORDER TOTAKE ACCOUNT OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL. TEXT READS:

"WE HAVE ALREADY, IN OUR OPENING STATEMENTS, OUTLINED THE
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MAIN ELEMENTS OF OUR APPROACH. WHEN WE PRESENT OUR PROPOSALS IN PRECISE TERMS, WE WILL BE GUIDED BY THE CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MYCOLLEAGUES ARE PRESENTING IN OUR STATEMENTS, AND WE WILL JUDGE ANY IDEAS PUT FORWARD BY OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN THE LIGHT OF THE SAME CONSIDERATIONS"END OF TEXT.

12 AHG CONSIDERED DRAFT OF PRESS GUIDANCE BASED UPON SUGGESTIONS INITIATED BY US REP. TEXT AS AGREED INCLUDES POINTS DRAWN FROM ALLIED SPOKESMANS' OCT 31 PRESS CONFERENCE (SEPTTEL).

13 GROUP AGREED THAT ON NOV 8 CHAIRMAN WOULD SEND TO NAC TEXT OF SOVIET PROPOSALS IT HAD BEEN ADVANCED IN PLENARY, ADDITIONAL PRAA OF UK STATEMENT, AND THE PRESS GUIDANCE. IN ADDITION, THE CHAIRMAN WOULD INDICATE THAT REPS OF AHG SCHEDULED TO MEET WITH NAC NOV 9 WOULD PRESENT ANALYSIS OF THE SOVIET PROPOSAL TOGETHER WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WESTERN APPROACH.

14. IN INFORMAL CONVERSATION AFTER MEETING ADJOURNED, ITALIAN REP ASKED WHY SOVIET REP HAD GIVEN THIS ADVANCED WARNING. US REP REPLIED THAT ACCORDING TO KHLESTOV, IT WAS DONE AS A COURTESY, SO THAT SOVIET PROPOSAL WOULDNOT COME AS A SURPRISE, AND THAT SOVIET REP APPARENTLY DID NOT WANT ALLIES TO SURPRISE HIM IN THE FUTURE. HUMES UNQUOTE RUSH

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